



RD Brings \$408 Million to Rural Michigan

Fiscal year 2004 was the best year ever for Rural Development in Michigan.

"I am extremely pleased with what we've been able to accomplish in 2004," said State Director Dale Sherwin. "The loan and grant funds we provided to rural Michigan are part of President Bush's effort to stimulate the rural economy. These dollars will multiply and create jobs in our rural communities."

The state's Rural Development staff was extremely successful in bringing federal tax dollars back to the state. Michigan was able to use all of its funds allocated at the beginning of the year and use additional funds unused by other states.

The federal fiscal year ended on Sept. 30. While the exact numbers are still being tabulated, the estimated amount of direct loans, loan guarantees and grants provided by Rural Development in Michigan is over \$408 million. This surpasses the \$359 million obligated in 2003 by nearly 14 percent.

The Rural Utilities Program, which finances water



State Director Dale Sherwin presented an award to the Rural Utilities staff for having their best year ever in 2004. Picture l-r are; Chris Maxwell, Andy Granskog, Frank Tuma, Sherwin, Paul Miller, Duane Reid, Todd MacLean and Winnie Kellogg

and sewer projects, had it's biggest year ever in 2004.

Over \$54.6 million was invested in improving water and sewer service in rural communities. In 2004, the Rural Utilities Program obligated 124 percent of its original allocation.

These dollars have a significant impact on Michigan's rural economy but they also have a real impact on the quality of life of Michigan residents.

Your federal tax dollars helped to create or retain about 450 rural jobs. They helped over 3,300 families purchase a home. Your tax dollars improved water and sewer service for over 15,500 homes and businesses, over 3,700 of these will receive public water or sewer service for the first time.

Rural Development owes its success to the families, local governments and organizations that utilize its programs to improve the quality of life for themselves and their communities.

Preliminary Fiscal Year 2004 Funding Obligations

Program	Funds Obligated
Rural Utilities (Water & Sewer Projects)	\$54,648,570
Community Facilities	\$31,124,465
Direct Home Loans	\$44,497,857
Home Repair Loans/Grants	\$1,873,342
Guaranteed Home Loans	\$234,000,013
Multi-Family Housing	\$32,318,934
Rural Business Program	\$8,072,360
Telecommunications (Distance Learning/Telemedicine, Broadband, Digital Television)	\$1,629,821
Total (does not include rental assistance)	\$408,165,362

Michigan Leads Guarantee Program

For the tenth consecutive year, Michigan led all states in the guaranteed rural housing program.

In 2004, Rural Development provided more guaranteed home loans, for more dollars, in Michigan than in any other state.

We thank all of our participating lenders and homebuyers for utilizing this program.



To contact Rural Development call, toll free; (800) 944-8119 or (888) 771-6993, TDD/TTY (800) 649-3777. Rural Development is on the Web at www.rurdev.usda.gov/mi/.

USDA Grants to Promote Michigan Grown Fruit

An organization promoting Michigan grown cherries and a Leelanau County vintner were recipients of value-added agricultural product market development grants from Rural Development.

“These grants are critical to assisting America’s farmers and ranchers increase markets for their com-

modities and to increase their profitability,” said Agriculture Acting Under Secretary for Rural Development Gilbert Gonzalez.

“President Bush is committed to helping more rural families live the American Dream through the creation of new business ventures that employ more rural Americans. This program is a significant investment in the future of rural families and communities.”

Authorized as part of the 2002 Farm Bill, the Value-Added Agricultural Product Market Development Grant program provides an opportunity to refine agricultural commodities and products to increase their value in the marketplace.

The Michigan Cherry Committee was awarded a \$141,210 grant to market the health benefits of tart cherries. The Cherry Marketing Institute will conduct the research on developing new products and markets within the natural and specialty food sector.

A \$50,000 grant will be used by the Winery at Black Star Farms in Leelanau to promote its new products. Black Star Farms has developed and completed initial marketing on 12 fruit brandy based products. The value-added grant will be used for working capital as the company markets these products for the national and international markets.



Fred Tubbs, chairman of the Cherry Marketing Institute, and David Hackert, chairman of the Michigan Cherry Committee accept a check from Tom Dorr, Senior Advisor to Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman. The check represents a value added producer grant from USDA.

Distance Learning Telemedicine Grants Awarded in Michigan

Three Michigan organizations were announced as grant recipients through Rural Development’s Distance Learning/Telemedicine program.

“Information technology is critical to rural Americans. It significantly improves the quality of their health care and their ability to gain access to educational programs that better prepare them to compete in a global marketplace,” said Agriculture Under Secretary for Rural Development Gilbert Gonzalez.

The three recipients in Michigan are the Mid-Michigan Visiting Nurse Association, the Harbor Beach Community School District and the Marquette General Health System.

The DLT Program is designed to meet the educational and health care needs of rural America through the use of advanced telecommunications technologies. This technology helps rural communities enjoy

enhanced educational opportunities, improved health care services and greater economic development.

Mid-Michigan Visiting Nurses was approved for a \$215,519 grant. The Association, based in Midland, provides home nursing, hospice care, home medical equipment and related home health services to patients throughout mid-Michigan.

The Harbor Beach CSD was awarded a \$466,685 grant to improve educational opportunities for about 750 students in grades K-12.

Marquette General Health System is the recipient of a \$176,421 telemedicine grant. MGHS is Upper Michigan’s largest health care services provider and is a member of the Upper Peninsula Health Care Network.

Contact *Rural Development News*: by telephone at (517) 324-5204 or by e-mail at brian.buehler@mi.usda.gov



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